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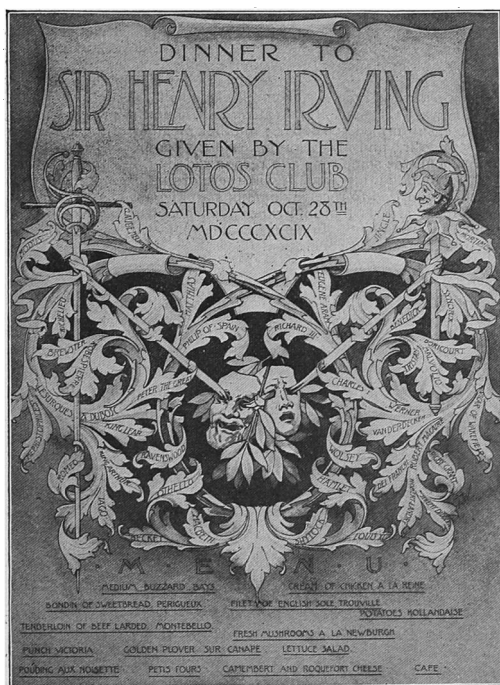
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THE LOTOS CLUB DINNER-MENUS.



THE Lotos Club is especially, even principally, devoted to the patronage of the arts. It remains to be said, however, that in the public functions which it affects in the shape of complimentary dinners, all but artists have been honored. There have been actors, authors, statesmen, scientists, and other men that were in the public eye, but the only artist ever honored in this manner has been the Englishman G. H. Boughton. Why not make a change? There are artists that deserve the honor which the Club may do itself and them. There is Raffaeli, surely as eminent in his profession as other guests have been in theirs. Carolus Duran is a celebrity. John La Farge, J. Q. A. Ward, Louis C. Tiffany, are men who, if abroad, would be treated with this consideration.

Though the Lotos has a goodly collection of pictures signed by famous men, the visitor to the club house is more often attracted by the less pretentious art displayed on the walls of the café downstairs. Here are the original drawings of the *menu* card designs of the famed dinners to celebrities. This feature of the banquets was originated about a decade ago, and during that period Thomson Willing, the artist-designer, has produced the greater number of them, indeed set the pace. One of the earliest was of the dinner to Harry Furniss when that artist's own drawing was adapted and the design printed on odd-colored paper. This was followed by the Egyptian design of the dinner to Whitelaw Reid, when he returned to this country from his mission to France: an attendant holds up a lotos flower before the guest of honor, while the procession of servants bring baked meats and goodly viands in the manner of the ancients.

In later years the designs have gradually become more dignified in motive and serious in execution. The William Winter design of wreaths symbolic of his books was typical of this. The *roses* for his "Shakespeare's England," "Brown Heath" and Blue Bells," for his book of that name, and Rosemary and Rue for his "Shadows of the Stage." Those who were at the Anthony Hope dinner will remember the decorations of the room being in yellow with huge yellow chrysanthemums on the tables. In harmony with these was the menu, with conventionalized chrysanthemum motive. The sheepskin cover was extremely appropriate to the Justice Van Brunt design, which

was severe and classical. Last season all the designs were peculiarly successful. That of the "Logge de ye Goode Shippe Lotos," for the dinner to Schley, with the two stars of the Rear-Admiral in white on the blue cover was particularly prized. Then the heraldic and symbolic composition of the Herschell banquet won from his lordship admiration and compliment. Depew was greeted by a luscious *peach* printed on the covers, which inclosed the design proper, a dignified one as becoming a reverend Senator. The dome of the capitol showed in the centre, while dependent below were the arms of the State of New York, with laurels grouped about, held together by flying ribbons with titles of the various spheres in which the guest had won distinction.

In the design for the Irving dinner just given, which is reproduced above, the acanthus plant, used of old as the symbol of beauty, bears on its stems and leaves the names of the rôles made famous by the actor, each convolution revealing some new character. The Tragedy and Comedy masks, half hidden by a bunch of laurel, are here, as well as the duelling sword and the jesters's stick. In well thought out balance of parts, in architectural construction, as it were, this design ranks high. All which proves that an artist-designer may often be ranked above an artist, as, besides possessing technical, artistic proficiency, he of necessity must also be a scholar. The appropriateness, the happy inspiration, especially in minor details, is simply wonderful and adds immensely to the enjoyment of these menus. In fact, many a Lotos member frames these designs and uses them as dining-room adornment. The rush for autographs from the chief guest at these dinners has wisely been stopped by the management, it becoming an imposition and tax on one who could not well refuse. This makes autograph copies more rare, and a member who has a collection of these has a possession of great value.

AMERICAN PRIVATE COLLECTIONS.

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THE R. HALL MCCORMICK COLLECTION, CHICAGO, ILL.

ONE of the most important collections west of the Alleghenies is the one owned by Richard Hall McCormick, whose name stands closely allied to the development of the agricultural interests of America. In fact wheat growing, the right staff of American prosperity, as the iron industry is the left, would scarcely have stepped out of its nascency had not the "McCormick reaper" made the utilization of the vast Western prairies at all feasible. The McCormick name is likewise inscribed over the door of one of the important institutions of learning in Chicago, attesting the family interests with equal devotion to the material and the spiritual side of human life.

The present head of this old family, in his love for the beautiful, has surrounded himself with those expressions which form new creations from the mingled strength of light and shade: pictures, which are poems without words; figures flowing from inspired pencils, warm with blended colors. His selection gradually leaned towards the best of the English school, and in introducing an enumeration of the paintings of this magnificent collection nothing better could be done than quoting the preface to the illustrated catalogue which was prepared some time ago. The compiler says: "In the school of art, as in the school of letters, the law of progress has necessitated the development of certain qualities, which, in their exaggeration, became faults, but under the chisel of time and criticism are hewn into stones for the temple of beauty, which is the temple of truth.

"True it is, that for very long it was held as an article of artist faith that art was congenial neither to English soil nor to English nature. Against this prejudice English painters struggled long, and this accounts for the fact that in the early history of art those men who obtained fashionable patronage were for the most part representatives of foreign schools. They brought in artificiality in lieu of truth, allegory in lieu of reality, until the sturdy English mind freed itself, and found expression in the realistic productions of Hogarth.

"The new impulse was immediately felt in portraiture. Sir Joshua Reynolds dared to break away from dreary repetitions, and to paint his sitters just as he found them, in those chance attitudes which are ever truly characteristic; and with him arose Gainsborough and Romney, who treated their subjects with a breadth and simplicity unknown before this revival. Even Sir Thomas Lawrence and those who came after him, not as imitators, but as rivals, while their works lack much of the richness of their predecessors, yet had this good influence upon the school, that they encouraged more careful drawing of the head.

"The influence of Hogarth's struggle was felt, moreover, indirectly

in the realm of landscape painting, and it was reserved for Wilson, Reynolds, and Gainsborough to verify by their works the assertion of Reynolds, that 'the skill and genius of the landscape painter is displayed in showing the *general effect*,' so that 'the power of the *whole* may take possession of the mind, and for a while suspend the consideration of the subordinate beauties of details.' Much of this generalization, too, is noted in the works of Turner, who sought to give the *impression* rather than to render imitatively. 'He treated his work from the beginning as a whole, adding just as much in detail in the parts as was consistent with the general effect and that sense of mystery which he ever studied to preserve.' Yet, so far, no English landscape artist had been emancipated from the influence of the foreign school; 'Gainsborough, English though he was in almost every phase of his art, was not clear of the dark masters and the *brown tree* school; Morland was a Dutchman in subject and in the mode of composing his pictures, although by his effort after the truthful delineation of everyday, commonplace surroundings he showed that there was a store of subjects in English scenery, and a public to appreciate them; Crome, while his more important works show a great breadth of treatment, largeness of manner, and breadth of execution, yet built upon Ruysdael and Hobbema. Even Turner, in his earlier days, at least, showed the influence of Claude and Poussin; but when we come to Constable, we find one whose art is thoroughly and purely English—not alone in treatment and execution, but also in subject and feeling. 'He was the forerunner of the race of artists who, about the period of his mid-career, began to rely on their own impressions of nature in the treatment of their subjects.' There can be, therefore, no doubt that Constable had great influence on the landscape art, both of his own country and France, inducing, as he did, a candid acceptance of nature.

"For this reason it has been said that the nature of English habits, and the independence of English character, are favorable to art progress, for each man loves to think for himself. Unquestionably, this individual thought has been the secret of all advance in the past, since it has meant the rejection of all that is artificial for that which is true."

My own acquaintance with the McCormick collection dates from the Columbian year. Since then I have been able to admire several of the additions which were gradually made. The liberality of the philanthropist in allowing a large part of his collection to be for so long a time at the Chicago Art Institute for public inspection and appreciation must be highly commended.

While there are a few other paintings, the collection consists principally of the works of those men who, for want of a better name, are dubbed "Old English," although, with the exception of Lely, they all belong to the last century. Three examples by Gainsborough attract attention, in which the silvery purity of technique is apparent. The "Lady of Quality" shows his exquisite handling, while the two landscapes are perfectly representative. Of the two portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds, "Mrs. Baldwin" (in her fancy dress costume worn at a ball given by George III.), and "Lady Turner," the latter is the most pleasing. The three Romney portraits, "Alexander Blair," "Lady Hamilton," and "Lady Beauchamp," are graceful and warm in color, his usually simple background being, after Reynolds's fashion, more elaborated in the Hamilton portrait. While graceful and sinuous, the uplifted left arm lacks foreshortening and is out of proportion, somewhat marring the effect. "Lady Hamilton" is also portrayed by John Opie. His portrait of a man in severe simplicity has expressive truthfulness.

The four portraits by Sir Thomas Lawrence are vivid and characteristic. Those of "Miss Barron" (afterwards Mrs. Ramsay), "The Marchioness of Ely," and of "Lady Dunmore," show this elegant court painter at his best, while the portrait of "Canova, the Sculptor," with grace and dignity combines more vigor than is usually seen in a Lawrence. There is a portrait by Hogarth, "A Young Girl," which belies the assertion that this cynical artist ever refused to flatter his sitters—unless in this case he had an exceptionally handsome sitter. The portraits by Hoppner, "A Young Girl," by Raeburn, "Jean, daughter of Sir Ewen Cameron," and of "Lady Beechey," limned by her husband, are representative of the individual manner of these artists. Further portraits are by "the fashionable painter of his day," Sir Godfrey Kneller, "Sacharissa," by George Morland, of "H. Wright, Esq.," by Thomas Phillips, a good colorist, of "Thomas Moore," and two very fine Lelys, "The Duchess of Portsmouth" and "Madame Aphra Behn."

The landscapes in this school are exceptionally strong. Besides the two Gainsboroughs already mentioned, there is an "Edge of the Wood" by the president of the Norwich Society of Artists, the only English local school of painting of any importance. This "Old Crome" is peculiarly charming. Another "landscape" of this artist is somewhat stronger in rendering, the composition also being more

English. "Hampstead Heath," there where Dedham Church may be seen in the distance, is Constable's familiar subject. The two Calcotts show "Warwick Castle" and "View of Greenwich," the latter, a marine, least conventional, both, however, graceful and charming in composition. John Sell Cotman has a "Signal Tower at Yarmouth" which shows the effective manner in which he introduced shipping details in his compositions; of Patrick Nasmyth there is a view on the Tay, "Dunkeld Ferry," where the giant crabs rise high, and all is firmly set with dark overhanging clouds, but yonder risen to the deep blue sky; it is a striking Scotch mountain-scene. The Bonington is rich in his "Italian Landscape;" there are further landscapes and marines by Richard Wilson; Thomas Stoddard, "The May Queen;" Thomas Barker, "The Shepherd Dog;" William Linton, John Linnell, William Clarkson Stanfield, two good James Starks (also a Norwich school man), John Frederick Herring, George Vincent, Henry Dawson, W. J. Mueller, G. B. Willcock.

Of genre must be noted the fine Hogarth "Midnight Conversation," typical of the painter of the "Harlot's Progress" and "The Marriage à la Mode." Also "The Death of King David," by Benjamin West. The two genres by Robert Smirke, "The New Page" and "The Obdurate Mother," plainly tell their own tale. The three Morlands in this style have amongst them one of the best works in this country, "Interior of a Stable;" while the "Market Day at St. Andrew's" by Sir David Wilkie, somewhat confusing by its many figures, shows the greatness of his technical skill.

From among the many other paintings I like yet to single out some noteworthy examples of the men that made a name before the "Old English." There is a fine portrait of "Sir Henry Guildford" by Hans Holbein; a "Portrait of a Young Girl" by Mierevelt, which is a masterly picture; one of the multitudinous portraits of Helena Fourment, which Rubens loved to paint of his wife; a carefully finished "Woman's Portrait" by Janssen van Keulen, which is exquisite and delicate with its background of soft olive tint. His "Young Girl's" portrait is more elaborate with immaculate presentation of white ruffs and jewels. A Van Goyen is of the usual composition of this Dutchman. The Van Dyck, from the Ratties collection, shows the "Portrait of a Lady," which is life like and surpassingly true.

SOME PORTRAITS IN THE CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, D. C.

A STRONG feature of the collection in the Corcoran Art Museum is its division of national portraiture. As has been stated recently, the beginnings were laid some twenty years ago, when the trustees purchased for \$5,000 seventeen portraits by Healy, originals and copies, embracing fifteen Presidents (from Washington to Lincoln, except W. H. Harrison's, which was added later), the portrait of Martha Washington, and of George Peabody. All these were purchased from the collection of Mr. T. B. Bryan of Washington.

The two Washington portraits were copied from the famous so-called Athenæum portraits by Stuart which are in Boston. Stuart himself considered these the most authentic likenesses. The Athenæum and the Lansdowne portraits are the only two existing portraits of Washington which Stuart painted from life.

The Athenæum heads were painted for Mrs. Washington; but she never got them, and they remained in Stuart's possession to the time of his death. There are two current accounts of the way this came about, and they are not entirely contradictory. One of them runs to the effect that Stuart himself was so well pleased with the work that he purposely refrained from finishing the background in order to have a good pretext for keeping the two heads in his studio; and the other relates that the artist frankly told Washington that he would very much like to keep the originals, and would give him replicas in their stead, to which Washington kindly consented. However this may have been, it is certain that the originals stayed with Stuart, and it is equally certain that they were worth a small fortune to him, for whenever he wanted money he had only to make a replica or two, and sell them. He used to call the Athenæum Washington his Hundred-Dollar-Bill, or his Nest-Egg.

There are few more celebrated portraits in the world. They have been engraved more than two hundred times. After Stuart's death, the originals of both portraits were offered to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for \$1,000, but the offer was declined. Later, the Washington Association and other gentlemen paid the sum of \$1,500 for the portraits, and in 1831 presented them to the Boston Athenæum. The Healy copies are splendidly executed.

The portraits of John Adams and Jefferson are also after Stuart.